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12. — *Memoirs of the Court of George IV.* 1820–1830. *From Original Family Documents.* By the DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM AND CHANDOS, K. G. London: Hurst and Blackett. 1859. 2 vols. 8vo. pp. 494, 422.

THESE volumes form a part of the valuable series of previously unedited documents which the present Duke of Buckingham has drawn from the family archives at Stowe, and made available for the uses of the historian. Like the previous volumes of the series, they are very imperfectly edited, as compared with similar collections of family papers recently published in England. But they are replete with interesting and suggestive matter, and shed considerable light on several important transactions in the reign of George IV. Their statements must not, however, be accepted by the reader without large allowance, since every measure of public policy is considered in its relation to Grenville interests, and every public man is viewed through the medium of Grenville prejudices. Yet at the period to which these volumes relate, the Grenvilles had ceased to wield the influence which they had formerly exercised. They were important neither from their numbers nor their talents. The nominal head of the family was by no means equal to his father in shrewdness and practised ability; and he was much guided by the advice of his two uncles, Lord Grenville and Mr. Thomas Grenville. The former was a man of great sagacity and large experience in public affairs, but too old to feel a strong interest, or to take an active part, in the political movements of the day. The latter had never been distinguished as a statesman, and was also advanced in life. The less celebrated members of the party were merely men of average capacity, though able to command a pretty high price in the political market. "All articles are now to be had at low prices except Grenvilles," said Lord Holland at the time. Of these, Charles Winn, for several years President of the Board of Control, was one of the most prominent, as he was certainly the ablest; and his letters constitute the most valuable portion of the volumes before us. Another frequent correspondent with the Duke was Mr. W. H. Fremantle, a man of less ability than Mr. Winn, but who was able, from his personal relations with the king, to communicate much interesting court gossip. Thus, in a letter to his Grace, dated August 26, 1821, he gives an account of his Majesty's visit to Ireland:—

"The passage to Dublin," he says, "was occupied in eating goose-pie and drinking whiskey, in which his Majesty partook most abundantly, singing many joyous songs, and being in a state, on his arrival, to double in sight even the numbers of his gracious subjects assembled on the pier to meet him. The fact

was, that they were in the last stage of intoxication. However, they got him to the Park."— Vol. I. p. 194.

Yet the Grenvilles pretended to have a great affection for his Majesty; and the editor of the volumes before us takes care to say as little as possible against him. Fortunately for the cause of truth and good morals, it is not easy to make black appear white; and the common estimate of George IV. is not likely to be changed by a few honeyed phrases.

Among the subjects on which these volumes throw light are the Queen's trial, the junction of the Grenvilles with the Liverpool Administration, the history of the Canning Administration, and the settlement of the Catholic Question. It is interesting to look at these subjects through Grenville glasses; and as a whole the volumes are a welcome addition to our historical stores.

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13.— *Domestic Annals of Scotland from the Reformation to the Revolution.* By ROBERT CHAMBERS, F. R. S. E., F. S. A. Sc., etc. Edinburgh and London: W. & R. Chambers. 1858. 2 vols. 8vo. pp. xi. and 549, 523.

MR. ROBERT CHAMBERS is favorably known as the author of several works of an historical character, designed to promote the intellectual culture of his countrymen, and to diffuse among them a knowledge of Scotch history. In this design he has been very successful. His works have received the commendation of judicious critics; their circulation both at home and abroad has been very large; and several of them have been reprinted in this country. The volumes before us belong to the same class of publications as his previous works, and are equally deserving of favor. Their special object is to bring together in a connected form such characteristic incidents in Scottish annals as may illustrate the social condition of the people for the century and a quarter from the return of Queen Mary to Scotland, in 1561, to the Revolution of 1688. With this view, and impressed with the belief that historians have too much neglected the manners, opinions, and personal condition of the lower classes, Mr. Chambers has sought to exhibit "the series of occurrences beneath the region of history, the effects of passion, superstition, and ignorance in the people, the extraordinary natural events which disturbed their tranquillity, the calamities which affected their well-being, the traits of false political economy by which that well-being was checked, and, generally, those things which enable us to see